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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [PINR](#) [RS](#) [MD](#)  
SUBJECT: EX-PRESIDENT VORONIN SPECULATES ON  
UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Classified by: Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry for  
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a December 3 meeting with the Ambassador, ex-President Vladimir Voronin reaffirmed his position that the Party of Communists (PCRM) would not participate in the December 7 presidential vote. He conceded that a group of PCRM MPs led by Vladimir Turcan and Victor Stepaniuc appeared ready to break with his party and said that each MP would be free to vote if he chose to. Nevertheless, he predicted that new parliamentary elections were all but certain, both because too few PCRM MPs would vote for Alliance candidate Lupu and because it was possible that some of PM Filat's MPs would vote against Lupu. Voronin also was sharply critical of Speaker and Acting President Ghimpu's proposal to introduce a new Constitution should Lupu's election fail, and vowed that the PCRM would oppose a referendum on this subject. Although Voronin told the Ambassador that he opposed letting the PCRM vote for Lupu, we had the impression that he has not yet made up his mind what to do. End Summary.

PCRM Will Not Participate -- But MPs Free to Vote

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¶2. (C) In a December 3 meeting, Ex-President Voronin and the Ambassador discussed at length the upcoming parliamentary balloting for President scheduled for December 7. Voronin said that the current Parliament, under "the idiot" Ghimpu, was "irrevocably flawed," and that Moldova needed new parliamentary elections. He said the PCRM would once again walk out of Parliament before the presidential vote (as they did on November 10), and predicted that Alliance candidate Lupu would fall short of the 61 votes for election. However, he said (somewhat contradictorily) that if some PCRM deputies wanted to stay and vote that was their prerogative. As party leader, it was not his business to force anyone to vote in a certain way.

¶3. (C) Voronin said that while there has never been a case of a "treachery" within the PCRM, he also said that he was aware of rumors that a group of PCRM deputies claimed to be ready to vote for Lupu. He said that he did not know whether there were "six, eight or twelve, or even 20" such MPs, but that it was best to wait until December 7 and see what transpired.

¶4. (C) Voronin noted that the most active of these rumored breakaway MPs was Vladimir Turcan. In

what appeared a veiled threat he noted that Turcan had "certain interests" (i.e. business interests) and thus could "lose a lot." He also told the Ambassador that former Deputy Prime Minister Victor Stepaniuc was ready to split and had written a 15-page letter to the party outlining his position. But while Voronin acknowledged that such a breakaway development would be a blow to the unity and image of the PCRM, he dismissed the rumors of a large-scale exodus as "just talk."

¶15. (C) Furthermore, Voronin suggested that even if some PCRM MPs did vote for Lupu, some of PM Filat's deputies might refrain from voting, since it was "not in Filat's interest" to see Lupu become President. If the Alliance sees that no one from the PCRM votes, then, predicted Voronin, they will all vote for Lupu. On the other hand, he stated, if some PCRM MPs voted, he expected that an equal number of Filat's deputies would not vote for Lupu. Voronin claimed to his information regarding Filat's intentions came from "most reliable sources."

Voronin Not Interested in Lupu's 12 Principles

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¶16. (C) Voronin also dismissed Lupu's offer of 12-point proposal for cooperation between the Alliance and PCRM -- which Lupu released recently -- as purely Lupu's initiative, and not that of the Alliance. According to Voronin, it was clear that Lupu had not consulted with the rest of his

Alliance partners on this document. Thus, Voronin concluded, even if the PCRM accepted it, the accord could not be implemented. In response to the question of whether Voronin would find the "12 Principles" acceptable if all four Alliance leaders signed on to support it, Voronin said that as a "matter of principle" Lupu should have also promised that the Democratic Party would leave the Alliance.

¶17. (C) Voronin related that in private conversations with Lupu, he had repeatedly said that if the latter wished to cooperate with the PCRM, he should split from the Alliance and enter a coalition with the PCRM. With the PCRM's 48 votes and Lupu's Democratic Party's 13, they would have the majority needed to elect the President. Voronin said he believed such a coalition would be supported by PCRM members, the population of Moldova, and even the European Union.

¶18. (C) In a rather surprising aside given his previously expressed bitterness and opposition to Lupu, Voronin praised the presidential candidate as being "smart, proper, intelligent and decent." He also said that Lupu "was not a traitor," that he (Voronin) "sympathized" with him and "viewed him like a son," but that he "could not help him now."

Concerns About Ghimpu

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¶19. (C) Voronin also said that he was concerned about the Alliance's position on Moldova's statehood, pointing to Ghimpu's statements on December 1 (Romania's National Day) about his Romanian identity. Thus, he concluded, even if the other three Alliance leaders supported Lupu's "12 Principles," an agreement was not in PCRM interest. Voronin said that "after eight years of working around the clock," he was not ready to hand the country over to someone like Ghimpu. Voronin also disparaged Ghimpu's intelligence, at various times calling him an "idiot" and claiming

that the acting President had "undergone brain surgery three times." Voronin added that he had meet with Filat and Lupu and would continue to do so, but could not meet with Ghimpu.

New Constitution: A Big Mistake

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¶9. (C) Voronin noted that the Alliance had already initiated discussions of a new Constitution.

(Note: Should Lupu's election fail, some Alliance leaders have suggested that the Constitution be rewritten to either lower the parliamentary threshold for electing a president or to allow for direct presidential elections. Adopting a new Constitution is considered to be easier than amending the existing Constitution, which would require 67 votes in Parliament). He argued that this was "a big mistake" as a country's Constitution was "like its Bible." Once it exists, it could not be rewritten, he said. He also noted that the Communists had made only one amendment in their eight years in power -- accommodating Gagauz autonomy.

¶10. (C) Voronin said that the Communists would oppose a new Constitution whether it was proposed by Parliament or by referendum. He also remarked that in recent days, Lupu had made "some wise declarations" against the idea of introducing a new Constitution. Nevertheless, he conceded that the population might support direct presidential elections. Voronin said that the Alliance better be careful as a new constitution allowing direct elections would open the door from him to run as well, and he might actually do so.

Russia: No Support for Lupu

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¶11. (C) Voronin also commented on Russia's actions in Moldova, saying that there were forces in Russia that could not give up Russia's strategic hegemony over the territory of the former Soviet Union. However, since his late October visit to Moscow, he had not discussed these issues further

with the Russians. On the other hand, suggested Voronin, Lupu was making efforts to court the Russians and had even gone to St. Petersburg for the Edinaya Rossiya party congress last week, though Voronin said that Lupu had returned "without results." Voronin said he was convinced that at this point the Russians were not supporting Lupu, though Lupu was seeking their support.

Comment

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¶12. (C) Voronin's discourse during the meeting was disjointed and occasionally contradictory. He appears to have softened in his attitude towards Lupu. Although he said he remains opposed to Lupu's election and set on new parliamentary elections in 2010, it appears he has not really made up his mind what to do. It does appear that Turcan, Stepaniuc, and others within the PCRM faction are set to cast their votes for Lupu and a split is in the making. At this point, they appear to have little to lose. By openly telling Voronin of their intentions and arguing in favor of having the PCRM vote on December 7, they have already moved beyond the point of no return. The damage in Voronin's eyes is already done, the public is aware of their desire to break with the party, and they would be better off taking bold

action. It is also apparent that with the PCRM out of power, Voronin lacks the ability to hurt breakaway MPs that he once had with the state apparatus behind him. Nevertheless, it is still unclear -- indeed, to everyone here -- whether Lupu will have the votes to assure his election.

CHAUDHRY